A Short Chat with the Reader

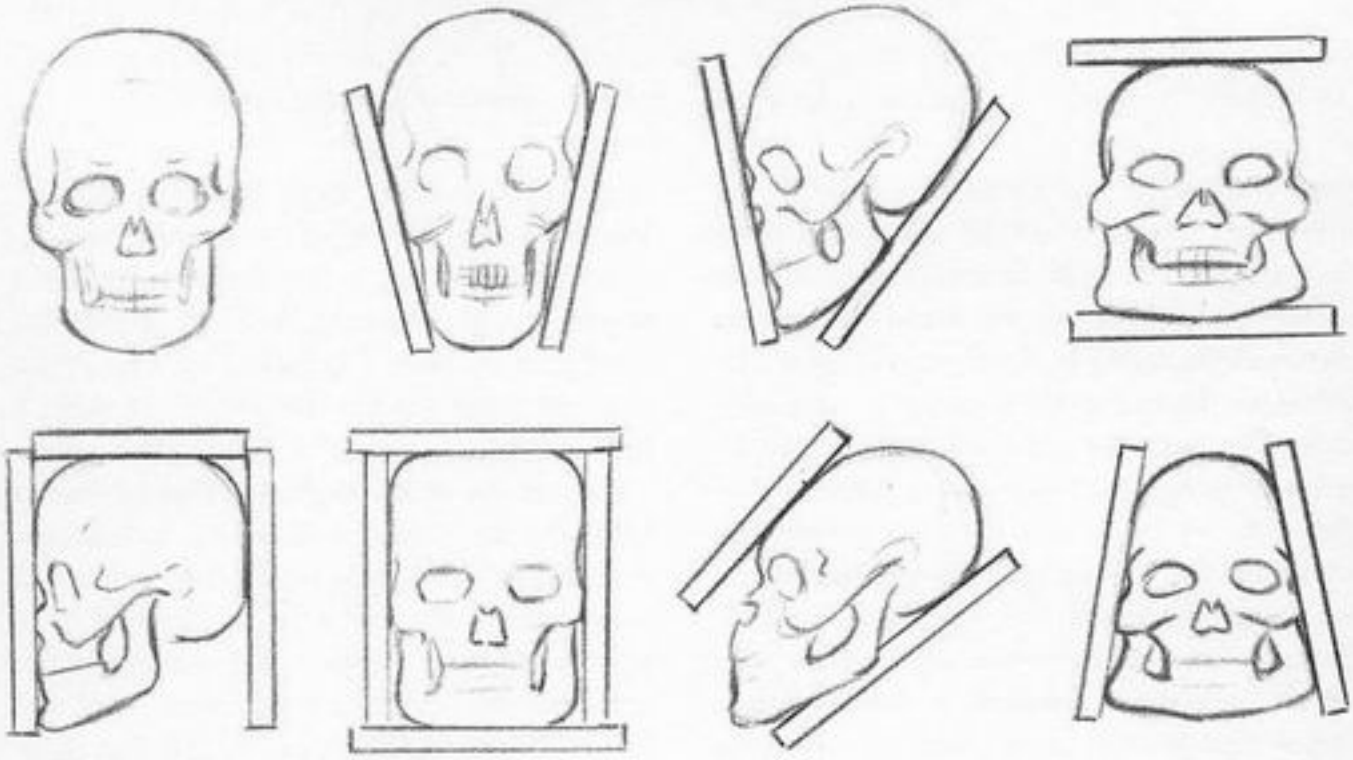
How FORTUNATE it is for the human race that every man, woman, and child is tagged with an individual and identifiable face! If all faces were identical, like the labels on a brand of tomatoes, we would be living in a very mixed-up world. When we think of it, life is mainly a continuous flow of experiences and contacts with people, different people. Suppose for a moment that Jones, the egg man, was the exact counterpart of Smith, the banker; that the face across the table might be that of Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Goldblatt, or Mrs. Trotsky—you couldn't be sure which. Suppose all the faces in the magazines and newspapers and on television were reduced to one male and one female type, what a dull thing life would be! Even if your face has not been your fortune, even if it is far from beautiful, still, nature really gave us all a pretty good break, for at least we are individuals and can each be thankful for having a face, good or bad, that is undeniably our own.

This individuality of faces can be an intensely interesting study for anyone, and especially for anyone with the slightest talent for drawing. Once we begin to comprehend some of the reasons for the differences, our study becomes all-absorbing. Through our faces, nature not only identifies us but tells the world a good deal more about each of us.

Our thoughts, our emotions and attitudes, even the kind of lives we live, register in our faces. The mobility of the flesh—that is, the power of expression—adds more than mere identity. Let us give more than casual attention to the endless procession of faces moving in and out of our consciousness. Setting aside the psychological and emotional phases of expression, we can express in simple language the basic technical reasons for the smile, the frown, and all the variations that we call facial expression. We say that a person can look guilty, ashamed, frightened, content, angry, smug, confident, frustrated, and a host of other ways too numerous to tabulate. A few embedded muscles attached to the bones of the skull provide the mechanics for every expression, and these muscles and bones are not complicated or difficult to learn! What a wealth of interest lies within!

Let me say at the beginning that to draw a head effectively is not a matter of "soul searching" or mind reading. It is primarily a matter of interpreting form correctly in its proportion, perspective, and lighting. All other qualities enter the drawing as a result of the way that form is interpreted. If the artist gets that right, the soul or character is revealed. As artists, we only see, analyze, and set down. A pair of eyes drawn constructively and in correct values will appear to be alive because of craftsmanship, not because of the artist's ability to read the sitter's soul.

The element that contributes most to the great variation of identities is the difference in the shapes of the skull itself. There are round heads, square heads, heads with wide and flaring jaws, elongated heads, narrow heads, heads with receding jaws. There are heads with high domes and foreheads, and those with low. Some faces are concave, and others convex. Noses and chins are prominent or receding. Eyes are large or small, set wide apart or close together. Ears are all kinds of shapes and sizes. There are lean faces and fat faces, big-boned and small-boned ones. There are long lips, wide lips, thin lips, full lips, protruding lips, and equal variety in the sizes and shapes of noses. You can see that, by cross multiplication of these varying factors, millions of different faces will be produced. Of course, by the law of averages certain combinations of factors are bound to reappear. For that reason people who are not related sometimes closely resemble each other. Every artist has



had the experience of being told by someone that a head he has painted or drawn looks like that person or like an acquaintance or relative of the speaker.

For the artist's purpose, the simplest plan is first to think of the skull as being pliable and having taken a certain shape as a result of pressures—as if one squeezed a rubber ball into various shapes without changing its actual volume. Although skulls have a great variety of shapes, actual measurements tally very closely, which means that the volume is about the same and only the shape is different. Suppose we model a skull in soft clay, then, between boards, press it into various shapes. Thus out of the same volume we can make a narrow head, a wide head, flaring jaws, and all the other types. How heads got to be this way is not our problem, which is only to analyze and thus determine the type of skull in the particular head we wish to draw. Later, when you become more familiar with the construction of the skull, you will be able to show these variations so successfully that you will be able to draw practically any type you choose and make it convincing. At the same time you can set down understandingly any type before you. By the time you understand how the flesh is distributed over the bones of the face, you will be able to vary the expression of the same head. The thing to remember is that the skull is fixed in position, and, with the exception of the jaw, immovable, and that the flesh is mobile and ever-changing, and also affected by health, emotion, and age. After the skull is fully matured, it remains the same through life and is a structural foundation for the varying appearance of the flesh. Therefore the skull is always the basis of approach, and all other identifying features are built into or upon it.

From the skull we get the spacing of the features, which is more important to the artist than the features themselves. The features must take their proper places in our construction. If they do, we have little trouble in drawing them. Trying to draw the features without having located them properly is an almost hopeless task. Eyes do strange things; mouths leer instead of smile; faces take on weird and unholy expressions. In trying to correct a face that appears to be out

of drawing, the chances are that we will do just the wrong thing. Instead of moving an eye into its socket, we trim down a cheek; if a jaw line is out, we add more forehead. We should know, in first laying in the outline, that the whole head is in construction. This I am sure you can learn from the pages that follow.

The big difference between the completely amateur attempt and the well-grounded approach is that the beginner starts by setting eyes, ears, noses, and mouths into blank white space, surrounded by some sort of an outline for the face. This is drawing in the two dimensions of height and width only. We must somehow get into the third dimension of thickness, which means that we must draw the whole head as it exists in space and build the face upon it. By doing so we are able not only to place the features, but also to establish the planes of light and shadow, and, further, to identify the humps, bumps, and creases as being caused by the underlying structure of muscle, bone, and fat.

To help the beginner to start out with this third dimension, many approaches are suggested by various teachers. Some use an egg shape; others a cube or block. Some even start with one feature and start building the form out around it until the whole head is encompassed. However, all these involve many chances for error. Only the front view of the head looks like an egg, and even that gives no line of the jawbone. In profile the head is not like an egg. As for the cube, there is no accurate way of setting the head into it. The head is totally unlike a cube from any angle. The only value the cube has in drawing heads is to help set the construction lines into perspective, as you will learn later.

It seems more logical to start with a shape that is basically like the skull, one that is simple to draw and is accurate for purposes of construction. This can be done by drawing a ball resembling the cranium, which is round but flattened somewhat at the sides, and attaching the jawbone and features to it. Some years ago I hit upon this plan and made it the basis of my first book, *Fun with a Pencil*. I am happy to say that the plan was received with great enthusiasm and is now widely used in schools and by professional artists. Any direct and efficient approach must presuppose the skull and its parts and its points of division. It is just as reasonable to start drawing a wheel with a square as it is to start drawing a head with a cube. By cutting off corners and further trimming the square you could eventually come out with a fairly good wheel. You could also chip away the cube until you had a head. But at best it's a long way around. Why not start with the circle or ball? If you can't draw a ball, use a coin or a compass. The sculptor starts with a form of the general shape of the face attached to the ball of the cranium. He could not do otherwise.

I present this simple plan in this volume since it is the only approach that is at the same time creative and accurate. Any other accurate approach requires mechanical means, such as the projector, tracing, the pantograph, or using a squared-off enlargement. The big question is really whether you wish to develop the ability to draw a head, or whether you are content to use mechanical means of projecting it. My feeling is that, if the latter were the case, you would not have been interested in this book. When your bread and butter depends upon creating an absolute likeness, and you do not wish to gamble, make the best head you can by any means possible. However, if your work is to give you joy and the thrill of accomplishment, I urge you to aim at the advancement of your own ability.

The drawings on pages 14 and 15 show the possibilities of developing all kinds of types out of the variations of skulls. After you have learned to set up the ball and plane, you can do almost anything you please with it, fitting all parts into the construction by the divisions you make across the middle line of the face. You have at your disposal jaws, ears, mouths, noses, and eyes, all of which may be large or small. The

ROUND

SQUARE

NARROW

WIDE

NARROW JAW

HIGH DOME

LOW DOME

FAT

THIN

RECEDING BROW

PROTRUDING BROW

FLAT BACK

BIG NOSE, LOW DOME

SQUARE JAW

RECEDING JAW

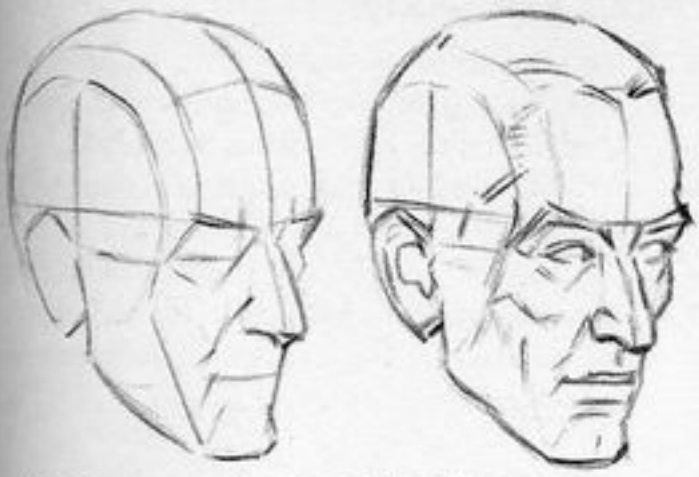
HIGH DOME, SMALL JAW

HEAVY JAW

ROUND BONE

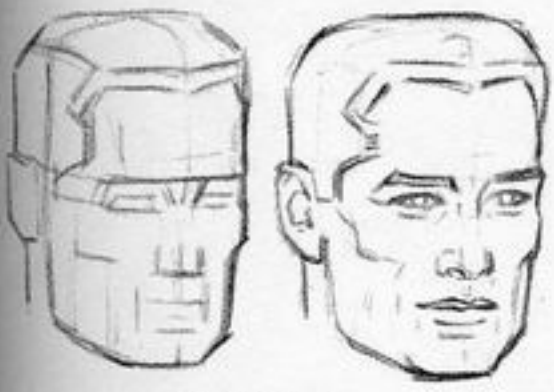
CONCAVE BONE

ANGULAR BONE



DEVELOPMENT OF A NARROW HEAD

A WIDE HEAD



SQUARE

HEAVY BONED, FLARING JAW

ROUND

RECEDING JAW

DIFFERENT FEATURES ATTACHED TO THE SAME CRANIUM

cheekbones may be set high or low, the upper lip may be long or short, the cheeks full or sagging. By different combinations of these, you can produce an almost endless variety of characters. It will be great fun for you to experiment.

Although the construction of any head involves more or less the same problems, this book is divided into sections on drawing men, women, and children of various ages. As we shall see, though the technical differences are slight, there is considerable difference in approach and feeling. The technical problems are explained in Part One, and the knowledge acquired from that is applied in the later sections on heads.

To be able to draw hands convincingly is also very important to the artist, and in this field too there is little material available. So Part Five has been included to help you understand the principles of construction on which realistic rendering of hands must be based.

Now let's get to work in earnest.

Part One: Men's Heads

Part One: Men's Heads

Let us begin by establishing our common objective. You may be interested in drawing as a hobby. You may be an art student attending drawing classes. You may be a young professional, out of school, striving to better your work so that it will bring in more income. Perhaps you studied art many years ago and now have the time and incentive to take it up again. Perhaps you are well established in the field of commercial art, where competition is formidable, and are looking for something that will help you hold your place and, if possible, keep you moving forward. Whichever category you are in, this book will be helpful to you, because it provides practical knowledge of the techniques of drawing heads, both for the complete beginner and to help the more advanced artist in those most frustrating moments when the head he is drawing seems to refuse to do his work justice.

There must be a genuine basic motive behind any genuine effort. Ask yourself quite honestly, "Why do I really want to draw heads and draw them well?" Is it for the satisfaction of personal accomplishment? Does it mean enough to you to give up time from other things in order to learn? Do you hope someday to sell your work and make it your means of livelihood? Would you like to draw portraits, girls' heads for calendars, illustrations for magazine stories, the people in advertisements? Do you want to improve your drawing of heads to help sell your work? Is drawing a form of relaxation to you, helping to relieve tension and clear your mind of worries and other problems? Search quietly and thoroughly for this basic motive, because if it is powerful enough, it will give your efforts the strength to withstand discouragement, disappointment, disillusionment, or even seeming failure.

May I add one suggestion? Whatever your motive, try not to be impatient. Impatience has probably been a bigger stumbling block in the way of real ability than anything else. Doing anything well, I'm sure, means hurdling obstacles of one kind or another most of the way to the goal. Skill is the ability to overcome obstacles, the first of which is usually lack of knowledge about the thing we wish to do. It is the same in anything we attempt. Skill is a result of trying again and again, applying our ability and proving our knowledge as we gain it. Let us get used to throwing away the unsuccessful effort and doing the job over. Let us consider obstacles as something to be expected in any endeavor; then they won't seem quite so insurmountable or so defeating.

Our procedure will be a little different from that of the usual textbook. In general, textbooks seem to confine the material solely to problem and solution, or to technical analysis. That, in my own belief, is one of the reasons why textbooks are so difficult to read and digest. Every concentrated creative effort involves a personality, since skill is a personal matter. Since we are dealing not with organic material like nuts and bolts, but with human qualities like hope and ambition, faith or discouragement, we must throw out the textbook formulas and consider personal achievement as the basic element of our planning. An instructor would not be very helpful if he gave his students only the words of a textbook, all cold hard fact, without feeling, without praise or personal encouragement. I cannot participate in all your personal problems, but I can certainly remember my own, and assume that yours will not be greatly different. Therefore this book anticipates the solution of these problems even before you meet them. I believe that is the only way to handle this type of subject effectively.

There is an element of joy in doing what you

have proved to yourself to be right. It is my job here to give you the working materials with which to make your own effort successful rather than to show that anyone can succeed. Success comes only with personal effort, aided by whatever knowledge the individual can apply along with the effort. If this were not true, we would be able to do anything in the world simply by reading books. We all know this is not true. There are books on almost any subject. Their value depends upon the amount of knowledge they contribute and on how well it is absorbed and put into practice.

To draw heads well, the artist must detach his mind from the sitter's emotional qualities and develop an objective viewpoint. Otherwise he could go on drawing the same head forever, almost each moment noting a subtle change of expression, or a different mood in the subject. One face can vary in a thousand ways, and a drawing must show the effect of a single instant. Let him think of the head as only so much form in space, like a piece of still life rather than as an ever-changing personality.

To the beginner there is a certain advantage in drawing from a cast, or from a photograph, for at least the subject is not moving and he can regard it objectively. It is logical that our book begin purely from an objective approach with a form most like the average head, with average features and average spacings. Individual characteristics are much too complicated until we are able to tie them into a basic structure, one that is reasonably sound and accurate. Let us fix in our minds that the skull itself is the structure and all the rest merely trimmings.

Anatomy and construction can appear dull, but not to the builder. It might be dull to learn how to use a saw and hammer, but not when you are making a building of your own. It may be hard to think of the head as a mechanism. But if you were inventing a mechanism, it would never lack interest. Just realize that the head must be a good mechanism in order to be a fine head, and you will draw it with as much interest as you would have in putting a part into a motor which you wanted to give a good performance.

It is evident, then, that we need to start with a basic shape that is as nearly like the skull as we can get it. Looking at the cranium, we see it most nearly like a ball, flattened at the sides and somewhat fuller in the back than the front. The bones of the face, including the eye-sockets, the nose, the upper and lower jaw, are all fastened to the front of this ball. Our first concern is to be able to construct the ball and the facial plane so that they operate as one unit which may be tipped or turned in any manner. It is of utmost importance that we construct the head in its complete and solid form, rather than just the visible portion of it. Naturally we cannot see more than half the head at any time. From the standpoint of construction, the half we cannot see is just as important as the visible half.

If you look at Plate 1, you will note that I have treated the ball as if the under half were transparent so that the construction of the whole ball is made evident. In this way the drawing on the visible side of the head can be made to appear to go all the way round, so that the area we cannot see can be imagined as a duplicate of what we do see. An old instructor of mine once said, "Be able to draw the unseen ear," which, at the time, puzzled me no end. I later realized what he meant. A head is not drawn until you can feel the unseen side.

It must be obvious from the preceding that it is impossible to draw the head correctly by starting with an eye or nose, oblivious of the skull and the placement of features within it. One might as easily try to draw a car by starting with the steering wheel. In all drawing no part can be as important as the whole, and the whole is always a fitting together of proportionate parts. We can always subdivide the whole into its parts, instead of guessing at the parts, hoping they will go together in the proper proportions. For example, it is easier to know that the forehead is one-third of the face, and what its position is on the skull, than to build the skull from

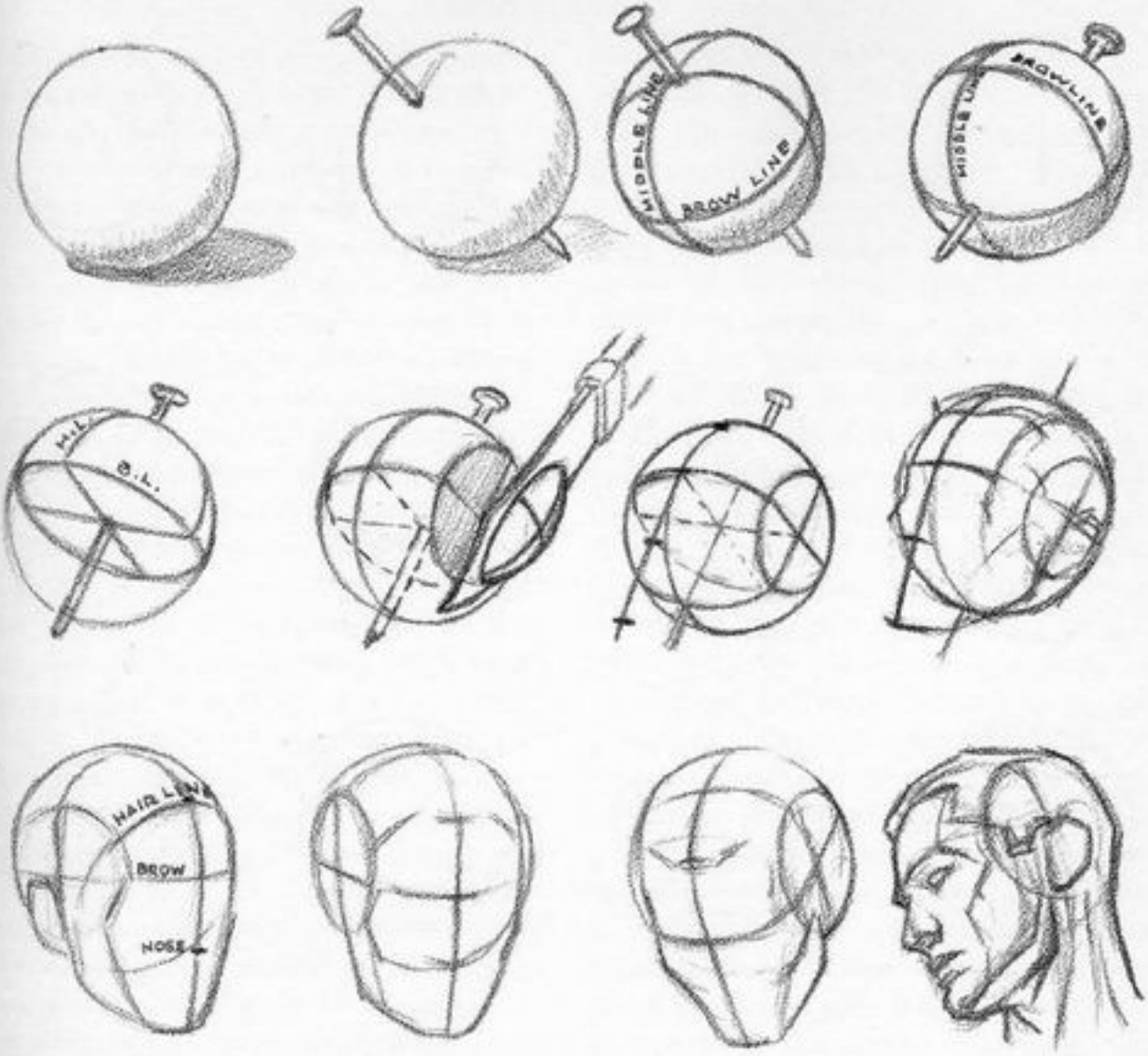


PLATE 1. The basic shape is a flattened ball

The cranium is more like a ball than anything else. To represent the ball as a solid sphere, we must establish an axis, like the nail through the ball at the top. Through the centers established by the axis, we can divide the ball into quarters and again at the equator. Now if we were to slice off a fairly thin slice on each side, we will have produced a basic shape that very closely matches the cranium. The "equator" becomes the brow line. One of the lines through the axis becomes the middle line of the face. About halfway up from the brow line to the axis, we establish the hairline, or the top of the face. We drop the middle line straight down off the ball. On this we mark off two points about equal to the space of the forehead, or from brow line to hairline. This gives us the length of the nose, and below that the bottom of the chin. We can now draw the plane of the face by drawing in the jaw line, which connects about halfway around the ball on each side. The ears attach along the halfway line (up and down) at a distance about equal to the space of from the brows to the bottom of the nose. The ball can be tipped in any direction.

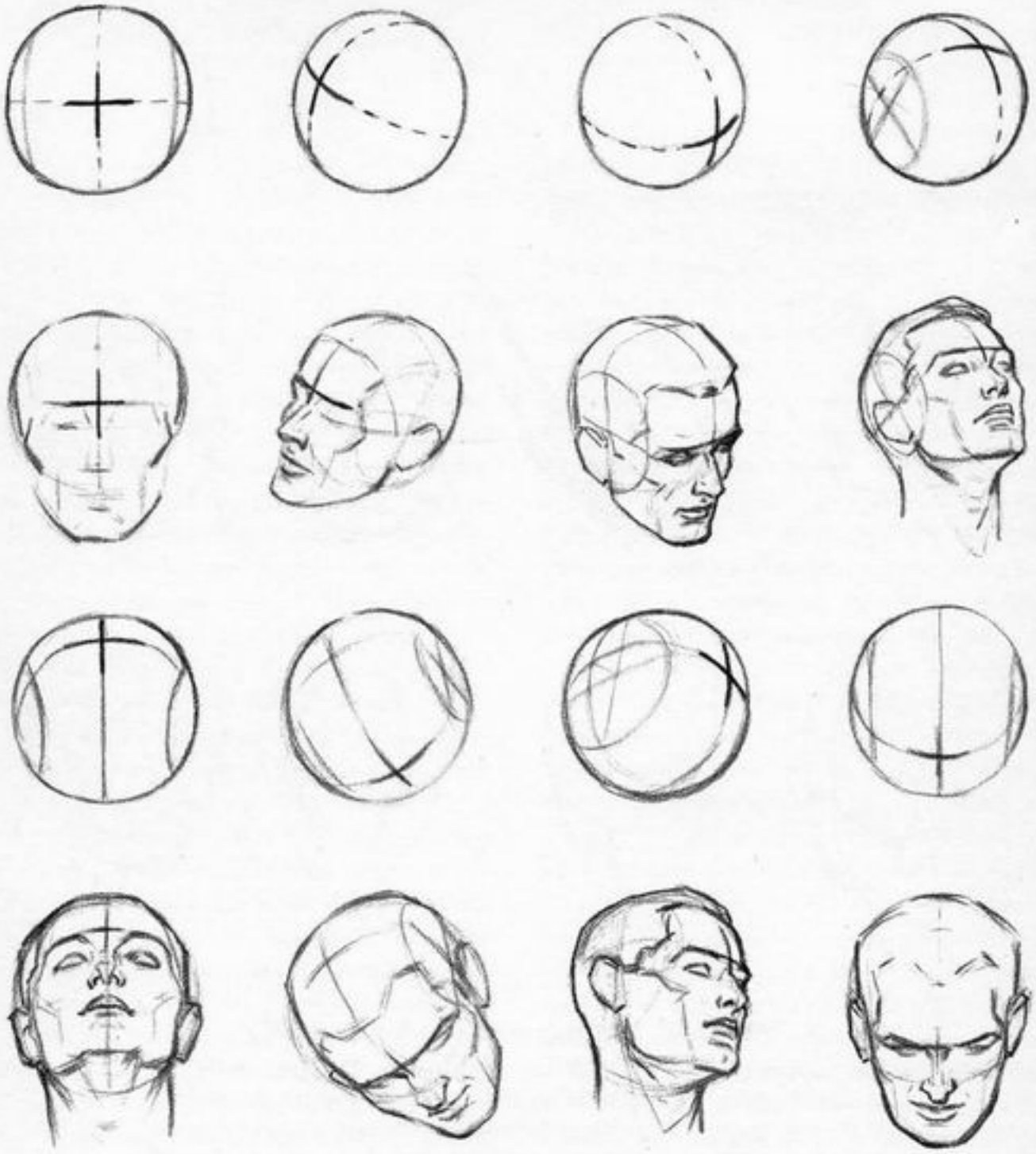


PLATE 2. The all-important cross on the ball

The "cross," or the point where the brow line crosses the middle line of the face, is the key point of the construction of the whole head. It determines the position of the facial plane on the ball, or the angle from which we see the face. It is easily spotted on the model or copy. By continuing the line up and down, we establish the middle line of the whole head. We draw the two sides of the face and head from this line. By continuing the brow line around the head we can locate the ears.

the forehead. Perhaps we have always thought of the head so much in terms of belonging to a definite individual that we have never considered it in a mechanical sense. It perhaps never occurs to us that a smile is a mechanical principle in action, as well as evidence of a beaming personality. Actually the mechanics involved in a smile are the same as those used in a drawstring on a curtain. The string is attached to something fixed at one end, and to the material at the other. Pulling the string buckles the material. The cheek plumps out in the same way. The working of the jaw is like a hinge or a derrick, but the hinge is of the ball-and-socket type. The eyes roll in their sockets like a ball bearing held in place. The eyelids and the lips are like slits in a rubber ball, which naturally close except when they are pulled apart. There is a mechanical principle beneath every expression put into action by the brain. Underlying the flesh of the face are muscles which are capable of expansion and contraction, just like all the other muscles of the body. We discuss this interesting material in more detail later.

We start drawing the head by establishing points on the ball and on the facial plane. Both the ball and the facial plane must be subdivided in order to establish those points. No matter how much you draw, how skilled you get to be, how well trained your eye becomes, you will always have to begin by building the head correctly, just as a carpenter, no matter how long he has worked, always measures a board before he cuts it. Construction of the face and head depends upon establishing the points of measurement. Any other way is bound to be guesswork, which is a gamble any way you take it. For the one time you guess right, there are many inevitable mistakes.

The most important point in the head from which to build the construction of the face is the point immediately above the bridge of the nose, between the brows. This point remains always fixed and is indicated by the vertical line of the nose and the crossline of the brows. On the ball this is the junction of the "equator" and "the prime meridian," the two lines that cut the ball in half vertically and horizontally. All measurements spring from this point. About halfway up from this point to the top center of the head we get the hairline, and have therefore spaced off the forehead. Dropping down an equal distance below the crosspoint, we get the length of the nose, since the distance from the tip of the nose to the brows is, on an average, equal to the height of the forehead. Measuring the same distance down, we get the bottom of the chin, for the distance from the bottom of the chin to the base of the nose equals the space from there to the brows, and from that point to the hairline. So it's one, two, three spaces, all equal, down the middle line of the face. See Plates 3 and 4. I suggest you take paper and pencil and start drawing these heads, tipping them in every possible direction. This can well be your first real period of study. What you do now will affect everything you do from here on. Plate 4 will give you an idea of how to place the features properly. The placement is more important than the drawing of the features themselves. At this stage it is not too important that the details of the features be correct. Get them to fall within the construction lines, so that the two sides of the face seem to match, whatever the viewpoint.

The next time you work with this book, turn to Plate 5, which is a simplified statement of the bone structure. No one detail of the bone structure is of great importance, but its total shape is of paramount importance. Within the shape we must locate the eye-sockets, spacing them carefully on either side of the middle line. We locate the two cheekbones opposite each other, and the bridge of the nose, which must lie on the middle line at the top and extend out from the middle line at the bottom. We locate the corner of the jaw and bring the jaw line down to the chin. Every head must be constructed so that all the features balance on the middle line. Plate 6 gives you more of the actual appearance

and placement of the bones. Note how in these drawings you are aware of the construction all around the head. I personally try to get the feeling that these are not outlines, but the edges of solid forms that I could slide my hand around. Do you feel as if you could pick up these heads with your two hands and that you would find them just as solid in back as in front? That is what we are working for just now.

Plate 7 shows the action of the head on its pivot point at the top of the spine and at the base of the skull. We must remember that this pivot is well inside the roundness of the neck and deep under the skull. It does not have a hinge action but a rotating action from a point a little back of the center line of the neck. So when the head is tipped backward the neck is squeezed and bulges somewhat, forming a crease at the base of the skull. When the head is tipped forward, the larynx or Adam's apple is dropped down and hides itself within the neck. In the lateral movements there is a strong play of the long muscles which attach to the skull behind the ears and down in front to the breastbone between the collarbones. At the back are the two strong muscles which attach to the base of the skull to pull the head backward. To get a head to sit properly on the neck requires some knowledge of anatomy, which is discussed later.

Some artists like to think of the head as being built of pieces which will fit together and fall into place to give the understructure of the head. See Plate 8. This is especially helpful in suggesting the third dimension, that of thickness, in your drawing. Much too often the face is drawn as something flat. We must consider the roundness of the muzzle—the two jaws as they come together. Because it is lost in the fleshiness of the face, we may forget the sharp curve of the teeth behind the lips. This is even more pronounced in animals, to which a sharp deep bite may make the difference between life and death. Think of the front teeth as choppers and the back teeth as grinders. The fangs, or what we call eyeteeth in human beings, are what an animal uses to hang on with, or to slash and tear. To impress upon yourself what the roundness of this area really is like, take a bite out of a piece of bread and study it. You will probably never draw lips flatly again. We must also remember that the eyes are round, though most of the time we see them drawn flatly, like a slit in a piece of paper. The eyes, nose, mouth, and chin all have this three-dimensional quality, which cannot be sacrificed without losing the solidity of the whole head.

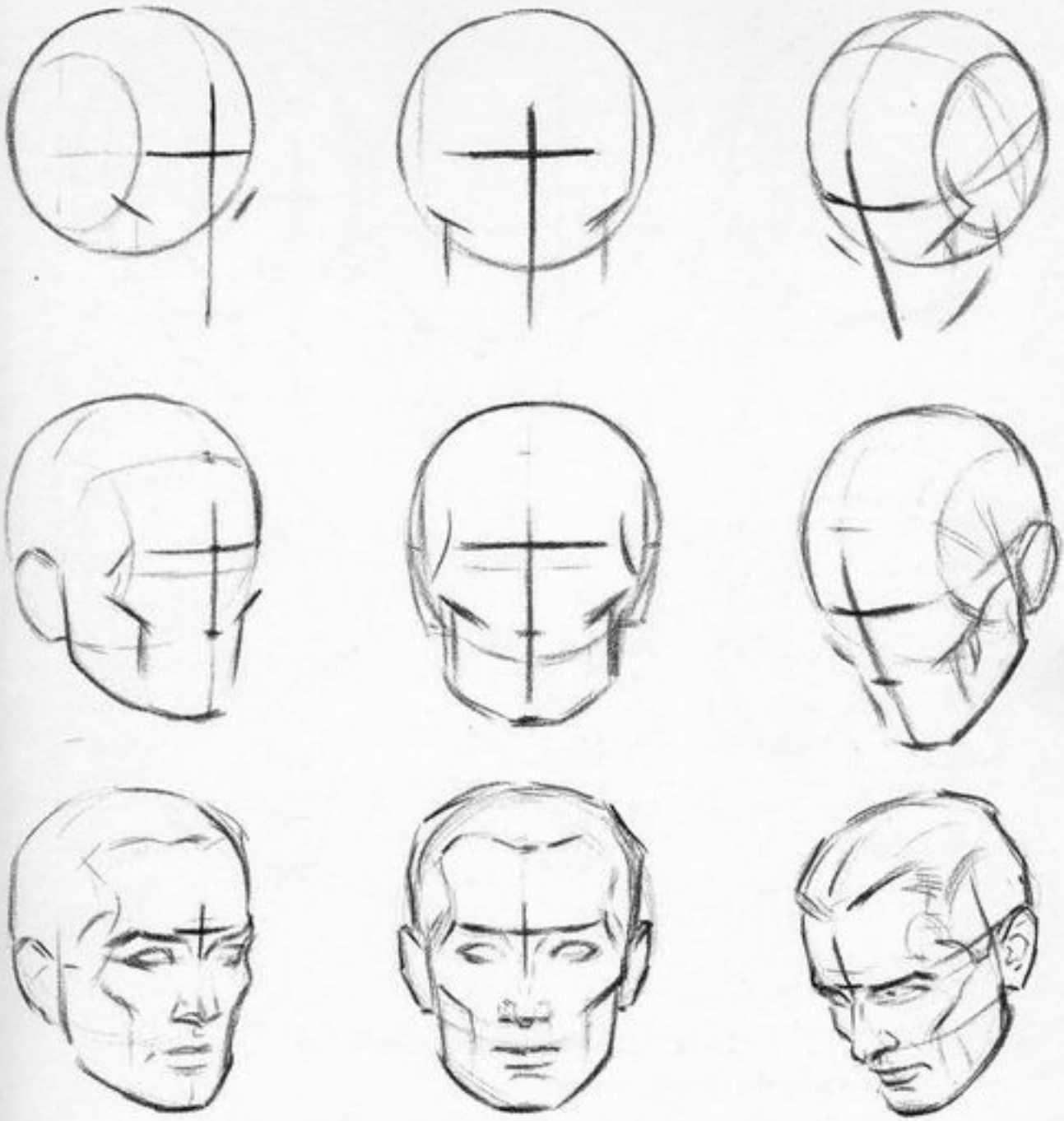


PLATE 3. The cross and the middle line determine the pose

Get out your pencil and pad.

It is most important to begin at once to practice setting up the ball and facial plane. Do not worry too much now about the features. This is simply construction, which you will probably use for the rest of your life. Establish the cross. Try to think of the construction all around the head, so that the jaws attach halfway around on each side. Remember that the eyes and cheekbones are below the brow line. The ears are about parallel with the lines of the brows and that of the nose. The cross almost suggests the face below. With this approach we can start drawing the whole head in any pose.

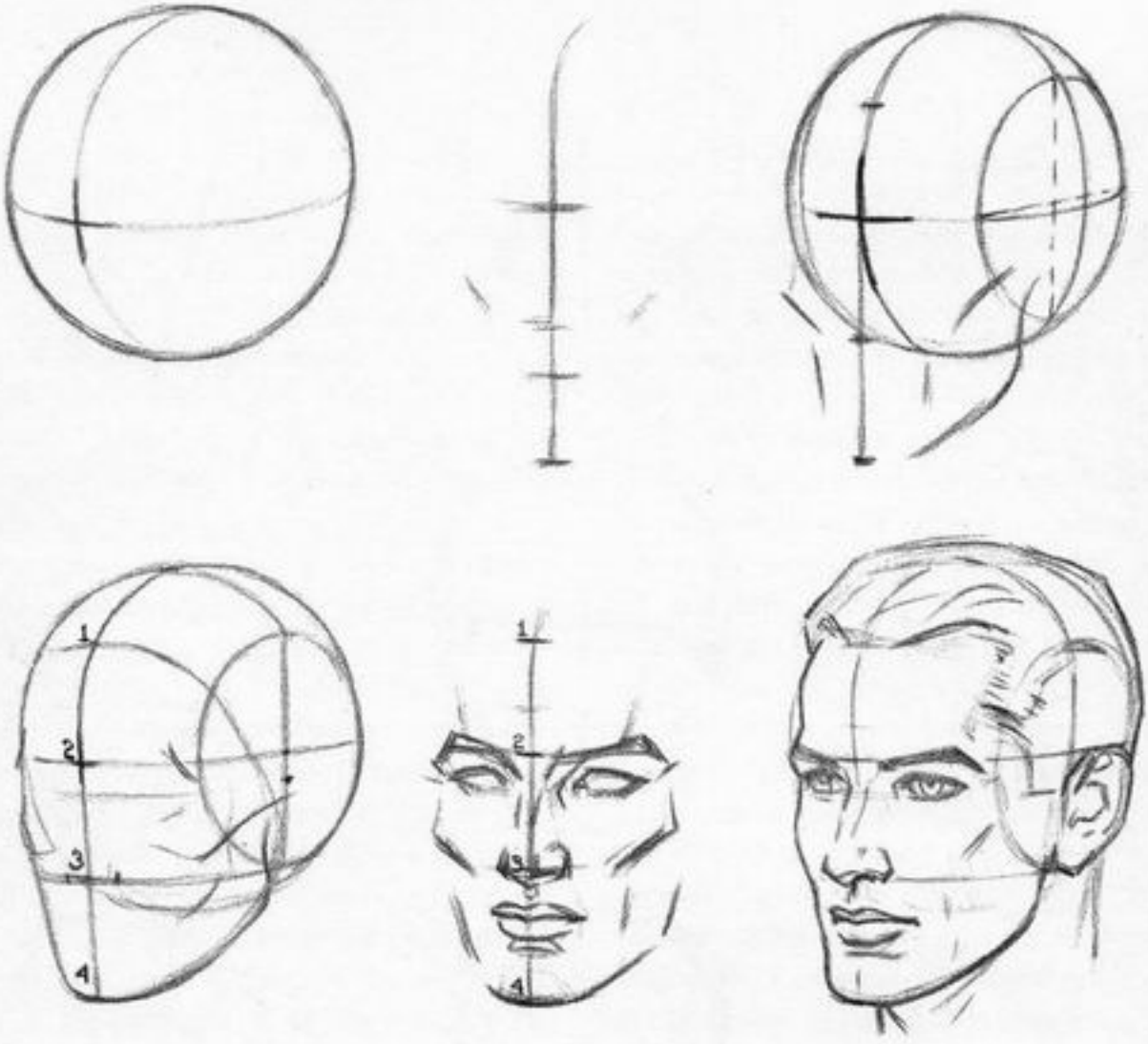


PLATE 4. Establishing the middle line

Start placing the features carefully.

If you have worked out the ball and plane and its divisions you will not have too much trouble in placing the features. However, you should realize that a feature will never fit on a head until it is placed correctly and in line with the construction lines of the whole head. Every artist must be prepared for a certain amount of struggle with construction, so do not allow yourself to get discouraged. Every head anyone draws depends on construction, just as much as every building, every car, every other three-dimensional object does. That is what the artist's job really is in learning how to construct things in three dimensions on a two-dimensional surface. We have to think of each thing we draw in its entirety and see how its dimensions appear to us from our particular viewpoint. Representation in three dimensions calls for knowledge and study. But such knowledge is no more difficult than that required for any other field. No matter how great your talent, talent has to work with knowledge to do anything well. When the search for particular knowledge becomes pleasant as well, half the battle is won. Construction need not worry you; it comes with practice.

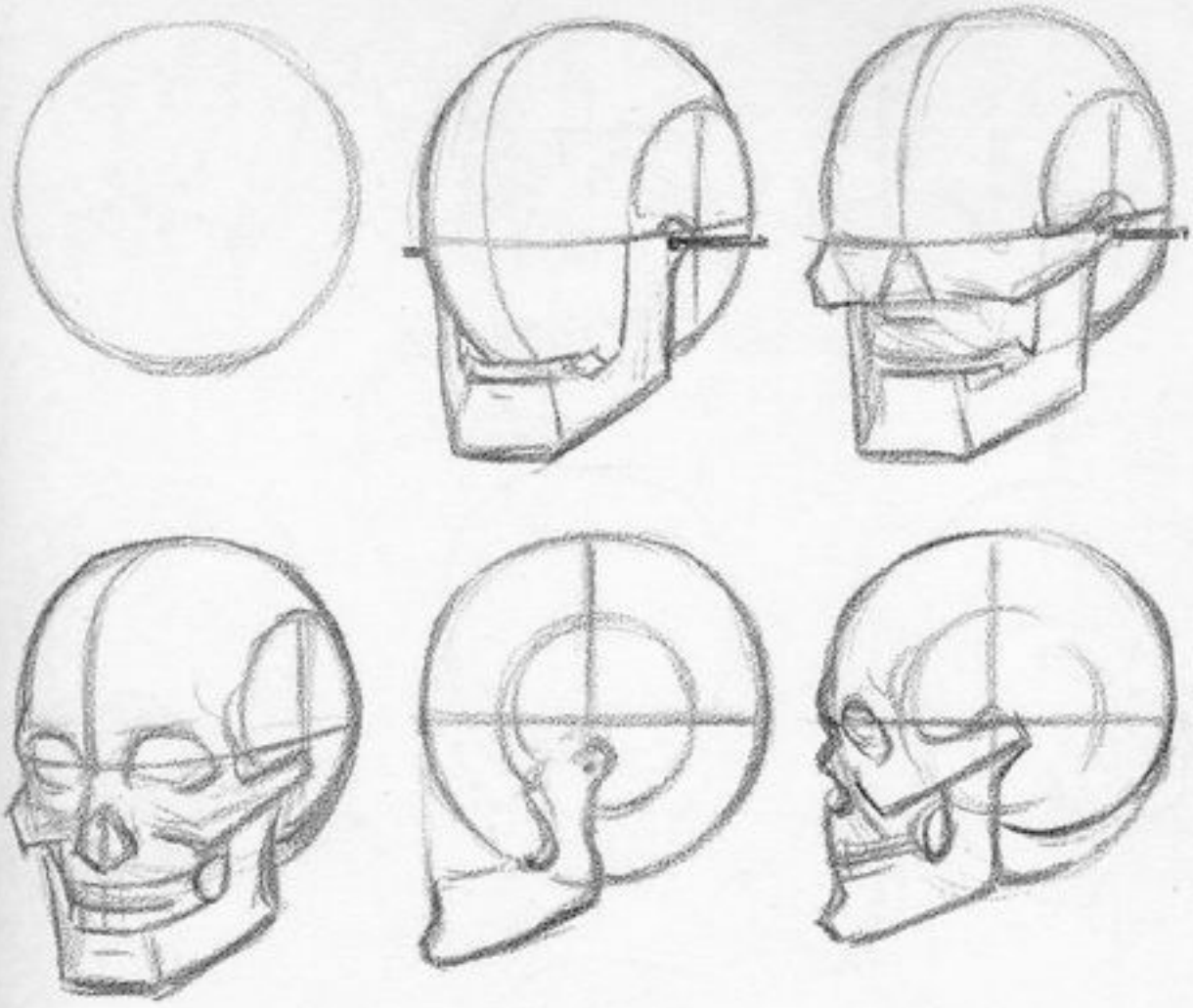


PLATE 5. Simplified bone structure

At this point it will help a great deal in constructing the head to have a fairly clear idea of the bone structure. Though we do not see the bones in detail, we must think of them as the framework of the head. All the division points of the head are related to the bones, not to the flesh. The reason we chose the ball and plane as an approach now becomes apparent, for our approach is the skull itself, simplified and made understandable.

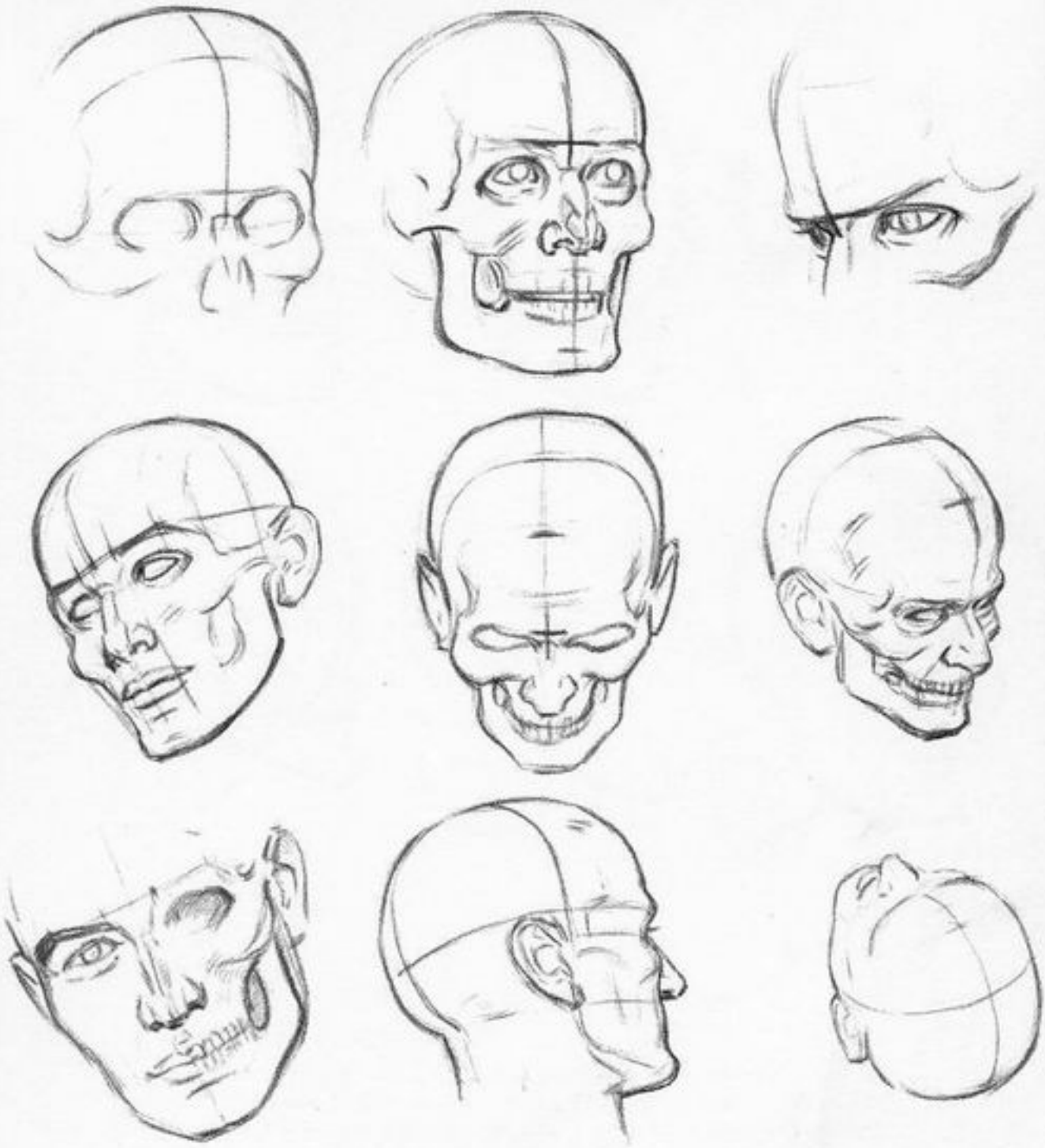


PLATE 6. The bony parts within the construction

Here we look at the bones more closely, realizing that, with the exception of the cheeks, all the flesh of the head lies over bone and is influenced by the shape of the bone. This simplifies our problem considerably, for except for the jaw the bones of the skull are all in a fixed position and move only as the whole head moves. Only the flesh around the eyes, the cheeks, and the mouth are capable of separate movement.

PLATE 7. Action of the head on the neck

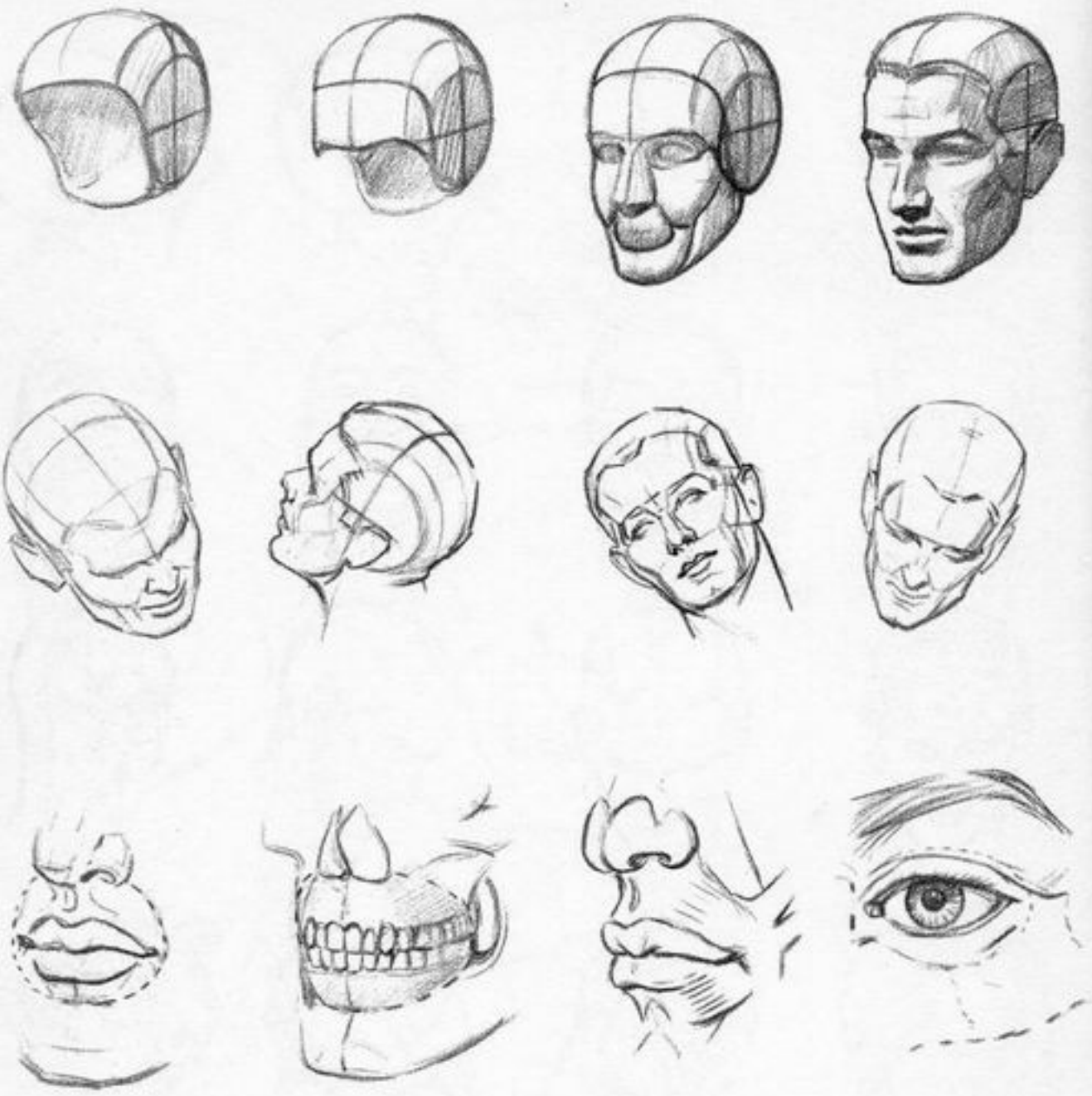


PLATE 8. Building the head out of pieces

If we think of the head as made up of separate pieces fitted together, we find the pieces shaped and put together as they appear in the drawings in the top row. Note the rounded piece which would contain the lips. We refer to this part of the skull as the "muzzle." In drawing the mouth we must make it fit around the curve of the upper and lower jaws and the front teeth. Too often the mouth is drawn as if it were flat against a flat surface. In the bottom row the three drawings at the left show the lips and the structure under them. The eye must also lie in its socket, as shown at the right. The eyelids operate much like the lips in closing over a rounded surface.